

be with us in international fora and on the key decisions that affect the safety and security of Americans around the world.

For more than six decades, it has been a key U.S. trading partner and a scientific innovator. We have Israeli engineers to thank for everything from advances in solar power to cell phone technology to AOL Instant Messenger. Equipment we are using in Iraq to fight terrorism and keep American troops safe was developed in Israel. Medical treatments we are using in U.S. hospitals to fight cancer, heart disease, and chronic pain were developed in Israel. Israeli-born actors are stars of Hollywood, and an Israeli astronaut has accompanied Americans into space.

So it is not only in the interest of Israel to have its full history recognized, it is in the national interest and the national security interests of the United States. It is in our interests to fully remember the unbreakable bond that has made us both stronger over the last 61 years and to make it unmistakable that our commitment is as strong as ever.

The argument for Israel's legitimacy does not depend on what we say in speeches. It has been made by history. It has been made by the men and women who have made the desert green, by Nobel prizes earned, by groundbreaking innovations and enviable institutions, by lives saved, democracy defended, peace made, and battles won. There can be no denying the Jewish people's legitimate right to live in peace and security on a homeland to which they have had a connection for thousands of years.

We can and must move forward in the peace process, and look for ways to reach agreement between all sides. But we cannot erase the moral distinctions between tyranny and freedom, and we must not edit history. If we stay true to history and follow our moral compass, I am optimistic that talks can lead to understanding and resolution of the very sensitive, detailed, and tough issues we face.

The next pages of Middle Eastern history are not doomed to be stained by an endless, senseless fight to the death. It doesn't have to be that way. Different peoples of vastly different backgrounds have peacefully thrived in the Middle East for generations upon generations, and this coexistence can happen once more.

Let us remember the words of Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat in 1978, when he accepted the Nobel Prize for peace—words that not long before would have seemed incredibly unlikely. He said:

Let us put an end to wars, let us reshape life on the solid basis of equity and truth. And it is this call . . . of the great majority of the Arab and Israeli peoples, and indeed of millions of men, women, and children around the world that you are today honoring. And these hundreds of millions will judge to what extent every responsible leader in the Middle East has responded to the hopes of mankind.

I have been to Israel. I have shaken the hands of its citizens and visited its

holy places. I know that in the heart of Israelis there is a strong desire for peace. We can never lose sight of why peace is so important. After the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust, the Jewish people would forever be mindful that no one knows what turns history will take and every day we are mindful that anti-Semitism has not gone away, whether in the form of a firebombing of a French synagogue, defamatory comments of a government official in South Africa, or a senseless murder in Washington DC.

Israel is the one place in the world, the one place where anti-Semitism can be structurally impossible. It is a field of hope on which fear can be vanquished, an island of refuge that can stand firm no matter how stormy the sea of history turns. That is why we must always keep it safe and always keep it free.

The United States is not simply allied with a government, it is an ally of Israel's people. It is an ally of Israel's democratic ideals. It is an ally of its history, of its aspirations for peace and prosperity, its can-do spirit, and amazing resilience in the face of threats from all sides. In that sense, we are not just Israel's allies, we are admirers, we are partners, and we are friends.

I plan to do everything I can to see that we support this friendship this year, next year, and every year thereafter.

Let me close by saying Martin Luther King said:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

We know that in Israel's quest for security, there will be trials along the way, there will be setbacks, and there will be dangers too tremendous for words. But if we continue the work we do and continue to stay true to the values that drive our journey, then the long arc will eventually rest in place in the land of Israel and it is a just and lasting peace that will be at hand.

I yield whatever time I have, and I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DURBIN. How much time is remaining in morning business on the Democratic side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Sixteen minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. I am going to ask consent for an additional 5 minutes on both sides in morning business, and I will try to not use it if I can. I ask consent for an additional 5 minutes on both sides.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent after my remarks the Senator from Oregon be recognized.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I amend the unanimous consent request that I follow Senator WYDEN?

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that on the Republican side, for their morning business, Senator MCCAIN be recognized first.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning the Republican Senate leader, MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky, came to the floor to talk about health care. It is a timely conversation among Members of the Senate about the future of this important issue. I know Senator WYDEN of Oregon is going to address it as well.

Yesterday, in Chicago, IL, which I am honored to represent, the President came to speak to the American Medical Association, a gathering of doctors from all over the United States, to address this same issue. It is an issue of paramount importance to these medical professionals. They understand, as we do, that we want to maintain the best quality health care in the world. In order to do that, we have to face the realities of the shortcomings of our current health care system.

Although we have many of the best hospitals and doctors and some of the best technology, we lead the world in the development of pharmaceuticals, we also know the cost of this system is spinning out of control. People feel it; whether it is individuals buying health insurance, businesses, governments—State and local and Federal governments—all understand that if the cost of health care continues to rise as it is currently going up, it will literally break the bank, not just for the Federal Government and all the health care programs we have but for individuals and families and businesses. That is the reality.

If we do nothing, if we ignore this reality, we are doomed to face a situation where more and more of the dollars we earn as employees will go toward health care protection and health care insurance and the protection itself will diminish each year—because that is the other reality. As the cost of health insurance goes up each year, the coverage goes down.

People know what I am talking about. When the health insurance company says we have a great plan for you but, incidentally, remember the cancer test you had last year, we will not cover anything related to cancer in the future, that is not much when it comes to insurance or protection or peace of mind.

They also know that many health insurance companies make this a deadly game of a battle between what your doctor says you need and what some insurance company bureaucrat is going to negotiate. You end up on the phone with some clerk in a distant location

debating as to whether there is coverage and whether they can go ahead with the procedure they think is important for you or someone you love very much in your family. That is the reality of where we are today. We have to deal with cost and deal with it in a fashion that is appropriate.

How do we deal with it? First, this system has a lot of money in it. We spend twice as much as any other country on Earth when it comes to health protection and health care. Yet when you look at the results, the actual survival rates for many of the serious illnesses that face us, it turns out that countries that spend a fraction of what the United States spends get better results. There is a lesson to be learned. There is waste in this system.

One of the articles that is making the rounds on Capitol Hill was written in the New Yorker magazine on June 1 by a Boston surgeon named Atul Gawande. He went to McAllen, TX, and tried to understand why the cost per Medicare patient there, at \$15,000 a year, was so high, dramatically higher than many other comparable cities in the State of Texas and around the Nation.

What he found, to his surprise and disappointment, was that the doctors and hospitals in those areas were bundling up and charging people as much as possible, ordering procedures that were unnecessary, doing things that were not called for. The reason was obvious: there was money to be made. As long as they kept piling the medical bills on the patients through Medicare, they received more reimbursement. They didn't have healthier people. They didn't have an outcome that justified it. But they made a lot more money in the process.

What the President has said to us is, with all this money in the system, we have to find ways to bring in more efficiency. It is one thing to say that 48 million Americans currently uninsured will receive protection. I think that is basic. That is moral. That should be one of our primary goals. But that costs money.

When the Republican leader comes up and argues this is going to be an expensive undertaking, what he is saying is we cannot afford to insure people in America. I think he is wrong. I think there are ways to do it, and we must do it because, honestly, if they don't have health insurance, they are still going to get sick. They are still going to a doctor or hospital and all of us are going to pay for it.

Right now we estimate that for an ordinary family in America, we are paying about \$1,000 a year more in health insurance premiums to cover those who are uninsured. In other words, the health insurance policy I have through the Federal Government with the Federal employees costs \$1,000 more than it ordinarily would so there is more money in the system to cover those uninsured. If we can bring those uninsured into insurance coverage, it

gives them peace of mind, it relieves this hidden tax on families across America, and it means, frankly, that providers—hospitals, doctors, and others—are going to be adequately compensated for the care they offer to currently uninsured people.

When President Obama comes to the AMA and talks about covering the uninsured, there is usually a cheer. That is 48 million more paying customers, people who will actually pay into our system. But he also talks about something that is not as popular with many health care providers and that is reducing the cost of this system.

What happened in McAllen, TX, is unacceptable; that you can have health care providers trying to run up the bill in an effort to make more money for themselves at the expense of the government, at the expense of health insurance companies but, frankly, not to the benefit of those who are being treated.

The Senator from Kentucky frequently comes here and talks about how much he dislikes—I will use that word—government-related health care. Let's make it clear. I do not know of anyone, including the President or leaders of Congress, calling for a government health care plan to cover everyone. That is not what we are asking for. We want to make sure there is private health insurance that is held accountable and is competitive so we can help bring down the cost. But to argue there is something fundamentally wrong with government-sponsored health care, even if it is just an option, a voluntary option for customers across America, is to ignore the obvious. There are 40 million Americans today protected by Medicare. Forty million seniors and disabled people who have quality health care because of a government plan that has been in place now for over 40 years. There are also a large number of our men and women who serve in the military protected by the veterans health care system, another government health care system, who believe—and I think rightly so—that they are receiving some of the best medical care in America. I do not believe the Senator from Kentucky is opposed to the Veterans' Administration and the health care it provides, but it is a government plan.

The same is true when it comes to the Children's Health Insurance Program. That is health insurance for individual children through private companies, but the Government has stepped in to make sure these kids are covered, and I, frankly, am very proud of the fact that when President Obama took office, we extended that coverage to 11 million uninsured children in America. That was a government effort to make the private health insurance effort in our country work better.

We have to get down to the bottom line here. Are we going to succeed or fail when it comes to health care reform? If we ignore the obvious and ignore the challenges, there is a genuine

chance we may come up short. But if we accept this historic challenge to come together on both sides of the aisle, I think the American people will cheer us on. They want to maintain what is good about the current health care system and fix what is broken. They want to make sure, at the end of the day, if they have health insurance they like, a plan they think is right for them and their families, that they can keep that. They want to make sure the health care reform is centered on patients and families and the doctor-patient relationship, not on a government bureaucracy. They want to end the health insurance company bureaucracies that are so frustrating and so expensive for families across America.

When the Senator from Kentucky, the Republican leader, comes to the floor and comes up with a series of criticisms about any attempt at reform, I have a question to ask him: What is your option? What would you do? Do you accept the status quo? Do you think this is as good as it can be? I do not. I agree with President Obama. We can do better.

The President said one last thing that I am going to say; that is, he said: If this were easy, it would have been done a long time ago. It is hard, and it will take bipartisan cooperation for it to succeed. I encourage my colleagues to join in that conversation at the Finance Committee, as well as at the HELP Committee, and I hope we can produce a product this year that shows we are going to move forward together to make sure we have affordable quality health care for every American.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, how much time remains on the Democratic side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 11 minutes 24 seconds.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, many Senators on both sides of the aisle are working constructively to fix American health care. For several years, I have spent time listening to colleagues, going to the offices of 85 Senators and at least that many in the House, and to thousands of others in the public and private sectors, about their ideas for fixing American health care. My aim with these discussions has been to find common ground and to chart a path so that this Congress and this President can do something this country has never done before: enact real health reform.

Today, I come to the floor to lay out the specifics of real health care reform. The President said yesterday that there has never been a better opportunity to get the job done; to improve the lives of all Americans and guarantee quality, affordable coverage to all of our people.

The question now is will Democrats and Republicans in the Senate rise to this challenge? Will this Congress and the President overcome the fear tactics

that have derailed past efforts? But maybe equally as important: Will this Congress and our President dare to pass real reform?

The pitfall, as I see it, is that too often we have been afraid of failure. If we draft legislation with an eye only on what we think can get passed, on what we think the American people will buy, if we play it too safe, my fear is that we will miss the opportunity for real reform. I believe that passing a reform bill that does not reform the health care system is about as wrong as not passing any bill at all.

President Obama said yesterday he will only support legislation that "earns the title of reform." I agree with the President, which is why I am going to use this morning to lay down a similar marker for what I believe is necessary to "earn the title of real reform."

First, real reform means that all of us, and especially the powerful interest groups, must accept changes resisted in the past. Insurers are going to have to change the way they do business. Pharmaceutical companies will have to be more responsive to purchasers that insist on more value and transparency. Doctors and hospitals will be held accountable for the quality of care they provide. Malpractice suits will be held to stricter standards.

Individuals will have to take greater responsibility for their health. Real health reform means changing the way business is done in the private insurance market. It means an end to insurance companies cherry-picking, a practice where the companies take the healthy people and send sick people over to government programs more fragile than they are. No longer should anyone make money by denying care to someone who needs it. That is wrong, and this Congress will make it illegal.

Real reform means everyone is guaranteed coverage by their choice of insurer. Under any new system, insurance companies must be required to cover everyone and they must be required to price with fairness so you do not get discriminated against because of your gender or your health status or your age. It means you will no longer be denied coverage or charged more because you were sick 5 years ago or today or you might be sick 5 years from now.

Real health reform guarantees that all Americans can choose their doctor and their health plan. The President said yesterday: Real reform will give every American access to the insurance exchange where they can choose to keep the care they have or pick a better plan that meets their families' needs. That means if you like the care you have, you can keep it. But it also means that if you do not like the care you have, you can reject it. You can reject it and choose a better plan.

Real reform would not only cover the uninsured, but it will make the lives of all of those who have insurance cov-

erage better. Right now the majority of Americans who are lucky enough to have employer coverage have no choice in where they get their insurance. I believe these Americans deserve choices too.

Some might say that this undermines the employer-based system. No, it does not. Rather, it makes the employer-based system more accountable at the same time that it makes health care more portable. Real health reform means that if you leave your job or your job leaves you, you will not lose your health care coverage.

Real reform will once and for all end the entrepreneurial tax in which Americans are afraid to go into business for themselves because they cannot take their health care with them. The President himself said it best when he wrote in 2006, "With Americans changing jobs more frequently, more likely to go through spells of unemployment, and more likely to work part time or to be self-employed, health insurance can't just run through employers anymore, it must be portable."

Real reform will guarantee that all Americans can afford quality health care. No longer should families be forced to pay more for their health insurance premiums than they pay for their housing. Our goal should not be to exempt those Americans who cannot afford to pay, our goal should be to guarantee that every American can afford the health care they need.

Real reform will be affordable for the Nation and for our taxpayers. It will reduce current costs and bring the rate of health care inflation in line with economic growth. Failure to meet this test would result in massive new government obligations and no means to pay for them.

Real reform must end the health care caste system in which low-income Americans are treated as second-class citizens. No longer should low-income Americans have less access to doctors than their Member of Congress or any other American. Today, 37 million adults and 10 million children effectively lack access to a primary care physician. Those are Americans who have health insurance but who cannot find a doctor to care for them. Real reform means ending the caste system in America that, in my view, discriminates against the most vulnerable and most impoverished among us. Real reform means that when you need a doctor you will be able to see one.

Real reform will reward Americans for making smart choices. Americans should be rewarded for choosing the right insurer for their families, and they should be rewarded for choosing a healthy lifestyle. This means creating a health system that no longer focuses primarily on sick care, but puts a priority on prevention as well.

Real reform will change the incentives that drive behavior in the American health system. It will reduce the demand and desire for unnecessary health care services. Health care insti-

tutions will no longer profit from the quantity of procedures they run up but will instead be rewarded for quality care.

Real reform will take an axe to administrative costs. Americans will sign up just once for health care. They will have their premiums taken from their withholding so they do not have to worry about making payments. They will go into large efficient groups so they are no longer left on their own in the individual market.

In today's non-system, people are an afterthought to the self-perpetuating bureaucracy of medical billing, reimbursement fights, coverage fights, and outright fraud, waste, and abuse. Like the President said yesterday, real reform will: "Replicate best practices; incentivize excellence; close cost disparities." In effect, he wants to see health care dollars go to pay for quality, efficient health care. And that is what I have described today.

Real reform means providing care. It means guaranteeing that all Americans have good, quality, affordable coverage, coverage that is portable. It means ensuring we end the caste system so all Americans can see doctors when they need one. And it means creating a system that is more intent on keeping people healthy than profiting from illness.

The central question, when it comes to real reform, is not who pays, but how we pay. Because everyone knows that ultimately the American taxpayer is the one footing the bill. It is now Congress's job to create an accountable system that puts the focus where it belongs, not on misguided incentives, not on shedding risk, not on quarterly profits, but on providing quality, efficient care for all our people.

That is what Americans want from this debate about health care reform. That is what I think can bring Democrats and Republicans together, working with the President under the banner of real reform. The country deserves it. It is time for this Congress to give it to our people.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. McCain. Mr. President, tomorrow the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions will begin consideration of a 615-page bill that seeks to reform our Nation's health care system. This bill, introduced by Senator Kennedy and others last week, has very great ambitions.

We all agree that health care reform is necessary. We all agree that Congress must act. But we must not act recklessly. We must not act with haste and political expediency. Health care reform will affect each and every American and we must do it right. I strongly believe that we have to start over and act in a truly bipartisan manner to address the issue.